

VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Montpelier Room, Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, 100 State Street,
Montpelier
March 17, 2009

The State Board of Education shall sustain a vision of high skills, creative thinking, and love of knowledge and learning for every student by setting education policy that ensures student achievement in a safe and healthy learning environment.

Approved Minutes – March 17, 2009

The current month's meeting agenda and packet materials may be accessed electronically at:
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#packet>

Present: Board Members: Chair Tom James; Alex Melville; Kathy Larsen; John Hall; Brian Vachon; Tess Savage; Fayneese Miller; Don Collins and Ruth Stokes via phone call.

DOE: Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner; Carol King; Jill Remick; Mark Oettinger; Marta Cambra; Bill Romond; Karin Edwards

Others: Brian Howe, VSBPE; Peter Hermann, VSBA President; Mike Bartini, College Board; Retta Dunlap; Bob Stevens, VPA; Jeff Francis, VSA; John Nelson, VSBA

Preliminaries

Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Armando Vilaseca called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m. He led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item B: Election of Officers (Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner, presiding)

Commissioner Vilaseca led the group in the nomination of officers.

Nominations for Board Chair – **Motion:** Kathy Larsen moved, seconded by Fayneese Miller, to nominate Tom James as the Board Chair. The motion passed unanimously (7-0). James then took over the meeting.

Nominations for vice chair – **Motion:** Larsen moved, Miller seconded, to nominate Ruth Stokes as vice chair of the Board. Miller then made the motion to close nominations. Both motions passed unanimously (7-0)

Item C: Roll Call and Introductions

Chair James and the Board introduced themselves, as did others in attendance.

Item D: Announcements, Board Member Updates

Larsen asked about the committee formed by the Governor charged with examining the state colleges. Vilaseca said the DOE had not been involved in the discussion.

Collins noted that the initial Transformation Policy Commission discussions included increased links with higher education, and that the Tim Donovan appointment as chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges was a positive opportunity to do so.

James reminded the Board of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) awards nominations.

A future E7 Meeting – this meeting of the representatives from the various associations with Administration happened previously. They have been unable to schedule a second meeting so far.

Policy Commission – first meeting was impressive and demonstrated the need for this commission.

James noted that he has been asked to testify to the House Education Committee this week on the Teen Parenting Education Program.

Miller asked in regards to the NASBE nominations – should that be as a body or individual. James said either way. Brian Vachon will follow up on the suggestion to nominate a Vermont organization.

Item E: February Monthly Report (Tom James, Chair)

James reminded the report is intended to be another way to communicate with everyone what the Board is trying to do. It is available online and conveys the major pieces of actions the Board has taken and shares information of the happenings at the department as well.

Stokes and Collins signed off of the call.

Item F: Public to be Heard

No one signed up to speak at this time.

Item G: Commissioner's Update (Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner)

Commissioner Vilaseca noted there is much going on in the department. The Legislative break allowed time to delve into areas he had been unable to previously. One area is trying to be more proactive with legislation, such as the high school dropout prevention bill currently in Senate Education which proposed to require education through the age of 18. The department has provided language that proposes to permit the commissioner to allow for alternative programs for completion. He has noticed a need for the DOE to play a stronger leadership role in the Statehouse. In the past we have been more reactive to legislation. He is hoping over the summer to identify, with statewide educational leadership, some topics and bills to draft to present for the January 2010 session.

Judy Livingston arrived (9:59 a.m.)

Miller requested more elaboration on the dropout bill which Vilaseca provided. Essentially the language provides more support for schools to identify and address the needs of students who are at risk for dropping out.

Education Funding Task Force: Bill Talbott is representing the commissioner on that committee.

School Calendar: Vilaseca has notified superintendents of his expectations that they follow the law to ensure regional school calendars are adhered to and that students have access to technical education programs. His notice included his intent to enforce the statute and rules as needed.

CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers) Conference: Vilaseca met counterparts from across the country. He met Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education and President Barack Obama.

Stimulus Package: He will be meeting with the governor regarding the stimulus package and student population decline. The USED has not provided specific guidance yet on the use and distribution of stimulus funds.

Supervisory Union Board meetings: Vilaseca plans to attend each SU Board meeting across the state. He was in Grand Isle which had four out of five budgets defeated on Town Meeting Day. He also met with the Vermont Superintendents Association Board and will continue to do so on a regular basis.

James asked further questions about the dropout rate. Vilaseca explained the Senate Education Committee goal of zero dropouts by 2020, noting that this will require schools to be flexible to provide multiple pathways. This is in line with the goals of Transformation. Miller noted that there should also be an examination of the systemic issues that lead to dropouts – rather than just looking at the outcome – in order to have a significant impact. She would like to see the draft legislation. Vilaseca will share that with the Board this afternoon.

Livingston noted that when she was on the House Education Committee they worked on a program to bring students back into the system through age 22. She questioned if those students were considered dropouts – Vilaseca said they are because we use a completion and cohort rate. Savage questioned whether students who participated in alternative programs and got their diploma are considered dropouts. Apparently they are, so there is some confusion and clarity needed. Bill Romond noted the need for consistency on the national level in order to inform the discussion. He noted students currently have to drop out in order to take advantage of alternative programs and that they should not have to do so.

Item H: Legislative Update (Armando Vilaseca, Bill Talbott, Mark Oettinger)

Mark Oettinger reported that the Sexual Predator bill (S. 13) has been signed into law. Cyberbullying may be expanded to include outside of school when it affects the school day. James questioned who would be the authority on that topic. Oettinger noted that bullying based on classification becomes harassment. Bullying alone has a high degree of local control for enforcement, noting the DOE model policy online. Oettinger also reported that the session is about half over and in a crunch to finish early. Therefore we will know shortly which bills are going to be held until next session. He reiterated Vilaseca's point that the DOE is working more proactively with Legislative Council to draft legislation, and that he would be happy to work with any Board members to review legislation on the Vermont Legislature Web site. James noted that as a Board they should be prepared to have special meetings in light of the time crunch of the Legislature.

Action Items

Item I: Consent Agenda

Motion: Savage moved, seconded by Hall to accept the consent agenda with comment. James commented on I2, approving the warrant for and Australian Ballot for the Rivendell Interstate School District.

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes of February 17, 2009 SBE Meeting
2. Approve: Amendments to Rivendell Interstate SU Articles of Agreement (Mark Oettinger, Greg Glennon)
3. Hearing Officer Appointment (Home Study) (Mark Oettinger; Barbara Crippen)

The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Discussion Items

Item J: School Nurse Policy (School Quality Standards) (Armando Vilaseca, Mark Oettinger)

Vilaseca noted the DOE is examining current education cost drivers and this is one of the rules that potentially asks schools to increase staff. Oettinger and Karin Edwards, director of Student Support and Safe and Healthy Schools, and Marta Cambra, director of Educator Quality, led the Board in the discussion of the SQS school nurse policy. The current SBE rule says there will be no fewer than one school nurse per 500 students.

The department does not currently have a school nurse consultant. Those school nurses at the school need to have supports as they are working on their own. Oettinger noted that the DOE school nurse manual was last updated in 2005. The medical standards change rapidly. The Department of Health also has a school nurse consultant and discussion is underway to have the Department of Health assume responsibility for the school nurse manual. Miller noted the need for a consultant at the Department of Education. Hall asked what the Department of Health School Nurse Consultant does that is different from the Department of Education. Oettinger said that position was more for medical protocols. Board members had several questions about the qualifications, the requirements, and the need for the DOE to have a school nurse consultant. Jeff Francis, executive director of the Vermont Superintendents Association, asked for a review of what is required in schools to provide the health support for students that are necessary, and to examine what the best way to provide coverage for schools with fewer students and how to coordinate with other schools in the region. He asked the two commissioners (Education and Health) to examine the most cost effective method to provide the coverage needed. He is also on the state school health council which did review the manual and noted the need for it to be updated. Miller noted that the statute and what is actually happening need to be aligned. Vilaseca noted that there are different schools with different situations, and schools are doing what they can to do what's best for the students. He noted schools have to cut staff and the DOE has been asked to reduce 23 positions. There will be further discussion on this topic.

Item K: SBE Policy on Surveys (Armando Vilaseca, Mark Oettinger)

Vilaseca noted that this was a response to recent requests for the Board to support or sponsor outside surveys. Oettinger has drafted a policy (see handout). Carol King contacted NASBE to see if they had any model language. None of the other states responding had a policy on this. Vachon found the draft addressing the issue correct, and other Board members expressed support for the policy drafted as well, noting the term “generally” was good because there are instances when it may be appropriate or desired by the Board to support these items. It is anticipated that the Board will vote on this item at its April 14th meeting.

The Board then adjourned for lunch at 11:39 a.m. Commissioner Armando Vilaseca left the meeting.

Milken Recognition

During the lunch break, Communications Director Jill Remick led the Board in honoring Milken Educator Award winner Shannon Lamb of Kindle Farm Services in Brattleboro. Lamb will travel to Los Angeles next month to be honored along with the winners from the other states at the Milken Educator Award National Conference.

Discussion Items (continued)

Item L: Civics Education Survey (Secretary of State Deborah Markowitz)

Discussion postponed until the May 19th meeting.

Item N: Statewide Technology Plan Review (Bill Romond; Peter Drescher)

Peter Drescher, statewide technology coordinator, and Deputy Commissioner Bill Romond gave the Board a brief overview of the Vermont Statewide Technology Plan. The plan serves two purposes: first, it acts as a vision for schools for their own planning purposes, such as budgeting, professional development and making partnerships with community resources; second, the plan is a requirement for schools to comply with E-rate dollars from the federal government. E-rate is a telecommunications reimbursement for schools. In order to receive funds, all schools have to have an approved local technology plan. Drescher outlined the role for the department, the supervisory union and the local school. Board members noted that it was a fairly daunting task. The plan invites public input as well. Members noted that technology is the backbone of the Transformation effort. Drescher noted that technology should be integrated, not treated as a separate piece. James noted he wanted to ensure that the Policy Commission was aware of the plan. It is anticipated that the Board will vote on this item at its April 14th meeting.

Transformation of Education

Item M: Policy Commission Update (Bill Romond)

Bill Romond updated the Board on the following topics:

Education Transformation Policy Commission - The Policy Commission has met once, and discussed critical areas to cover as the commission moves forward. Tom James and Don Collins represent the Board on the commission. Romond noted that there was consistent mention by commission members about teacher licensing, pre-service programs, graduation requirements and the school day and calendar.

November Secondary Conference Follow-up - Follow-up sessions with regional ESAs are currently being held. A common thread at many of the sessions has been schools indicating a need for external coaches to support their work. The department is also working to understand the applicability of stimulus funds as a potential source of monetary support for transformation work.

Internal Department of Education Work - Romond reported on the work going on within the department to align its work with Transformation, explaining that the department is engaging in internal think tanks on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Romond anticipates that this work will result in closer collaboration and collegiality within the department.

New Board Member Judith Livingston gave an example of a transformational anecdote, noting that an engineer found his passion by working on a project as early as 5th grade.

Item O: Rules/Regulations Review (Armando Vilaseca, Bill Romond)

Bill Romond spoke to the Board about the Rules and Regulations Review in the context of Transformation. The majority of the work will fall to the Policy Commission. Waivers will be

another way to work with and assist local school districts. Regarding those that actually require rule change, that would take about a year (at least eight months) to make a change. Board members asked about how this is being communicated to the field.

Discussion Items (continued)

Item P* Litigation Update** (Mark Oettinger)

No discussion (confidential item).

Item Q: Future Agendas (Board members; Armando Vilaseca; Carol King)

Summary:

April's meeting will be held at Mt. Abraham Union High School, Bristol.

May – Northwest Technical Center, St. Albans

June – TBD

The following items will be on the April agenda:

4:00 p.m. Student Recognition

Strategic Planning Discussion

SBE Annual Evaluation Discussion

Commissioner/Legislative Updates

FY 09 & 2010 Budgets/Stimulus Update

Transformation Discussion

- Policy Commission Update

- Dual Enrollment

AYP Determinations

Consent Agenda Items

- Statewide Technology Plan

- SBE Survey Policy

Carol will poll the Board as to its preference for the annual meeting date (June or August)

Adjourn

Motion: At 2:27 p.m., Hall moved, seconded by Savage, to adjourn the March 17, 2009 State board of Education meeting. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Minutes recorded by Jill Remick

Minutes prepared by Carol King